

Assignment I
Object Project

Fall 2012, Art 081 231
Rutgers University
Mason Gross School of the
Arts

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Section 1 WF 12:00–3:00pm
Section 2 WF 3:20–6:30pm

Section 3 WF 3:20–6:30pm
Section 4 WF 12:00–3:00pm

Office hours by appointment.

The goal of this assignment is to convey complex abstract ideas visually, through both imagery and typography. You'll also begin to consider how type and image work together, and how composition can influence meaning.

Bring four objects to class. These objects can be anything. With these four objects combined, create an imaginary character. Think about the physical qualities of the objects and what they could suggest about this imaginary person. The idea is not to imagine a character who owns or uses these objects, but rather to think about what the visual and tactile characteristics of the objects mean, and how these could be translated to personal characteristics — personality, values, habits, appearance, etc.

Write a short synopsis of your character (a couple paragraphs at most). You'll share this with the class and then begin thinking about how best to represent your character visually. The core of this assignment is describing your character without using your text—can you tell an audience who this person is only through your design, without the written description?

Each of your four objects will be represented by three elements: a photograph of the object, a piece of found text, and a color or texture. Each element will be placed in its own 5"×5" square at first, but ultimately the elements in each set will be combined. Consider how these elements will work as part of a set, and how all four sets will relate to each other.

After dealing with these pieces individually, you'll combine them into the same frame. Use of your colors/textures at this point is optional, but the text and photograph must be present, and you'll set the type yourself rather than using your original text clippings. You can only use Helvetica as your typeface. Size, position, orientation, and color of the text are all up to you, but it can't be skewed, warped, or otherwise manipulated.

Process

Step 1: Photograph your objects. Consider every aspect of these images when photographing them: the framing of the object, the lighting, the angle at which you shoot it, the background (the primary focus of the photo should be the object, but you should think about the context, too). Keep in mind how you're conveying your character through the way you're photographing the object.

Step 2: Find some text from a newspaper, magazine, or any source from which you can cut the text. Bring a range of options, and try to think unconventionally about word/image pairings; try to avoid being overly literal or redundant. Each excerpt should be no more than five consecutive words, and the words must be continuous—you can't separate the words and rearrange them. Position your text inside a 5"×5" square, carefully considering its placement. It need not be centered, but its placement should be intentional.

Step 3: Select a color or texture. This can be found and scanned or photographed, clipped from a magazine, or hand-drawn or painted. But again, think about what each of these different methods/techniques suggest about your character.

Schedule

Wednesday, September 12: Bring your objects to class, a your written study of your character, and a digital camera. We'll discuss your text and how you might photograph your object.

Friday, September 14: Bring printed photographs of your objects to class, along with options for your text excerpts and your textures or colors. Also bring a piece of 18"×24" illustration board, with twelve 5"×5" squares drawn on it, as shown in Fig 1. We'll work during class with your options for each set.

Wednesday, September 19: In-progress critique of your sets.

Monday, September 21: Begin combining all three elements. Come to class with sketches (either on-screen or in your notebook) of 15 different options for each set (these should be 3"×3"). Work during class on refining a few of your options in Photoshop.

Friday, September 26: Bring printed versions of all of your final compositions to class. At this point it's okay if you have a few options for each. We'll have a class discussion to help you with final refinements.

Wednesday, September 28: Final project due at the start of class. Each of your four squares should be mounted to a sheet of 9"×27" illustration board, as shown in Fig 2., with 2" of margin on each side of the board and 1" between each square.

Fig 1.

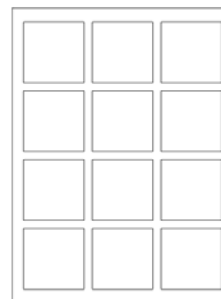


Fig 2.

